

From the City Manager . . .

The following is a reprint of the City Manager's article which appeared in the October 2002 publication of EVINCE.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS . . . You only have one opportunity to make a first impression. Like going on a job interview, the first impression our City gives to a perspective business or industry reflects on the perceived character of the City as a whole. That is why improving the beauty and natural splendor of Danville has become a top priority.

To enhance the bounty of wonderful assets like the Dan River, Millionaires Row, open spaces, and clean air, the City has embarked on an extensive beautification plan. For the last two years this beautification plan, spearheaded by the City's Public Works Department and City Beautiful Committee, has called for the planting of garden sites around the City.

Funding for the first of the tree planting projects came through the award of a \$10,000 State Urban Forestry Grant with additional funding coming from the Virginia Department of Transportation maintenance funds. Beautification efforts initially focused on planting trees at certain interchanges such as Piedmont Drive and Central Blvd.; Central Blvd. and Riverside Drive; Central Blvd. and West Main Street; and along the Riverfront Trail between Fall Creek and Brantley Dam.

Riverbank restoration and beautification has also taken place along the Dan River at Memorial Drive, along Pumpkin Creek, adjacent to the Riverfront Trail, and north of Union Street Bridge along the Dan River.

The Danville Interchange Gardens (DIG) Program was also started in the City with plans for numerous gardens at interchanges throughout town. Start up funding for the DIG Project came from a Carrington Trust Fund grant in the amount of \$25,000. The first interchange area landscaped was on the west loop of the interchange at Central Blvd. and West Main Street with the next improvement site across the way on the east loop of Central Blvd. at the same location.

In addition to these projects, the City Beautiful Committee and its volunteers have replanted and restored the flowerbed at Mt. Vernon Methodist Church, the flowerbed located at Howland Circle, and the flowerbed at the Public Library's front entrance on Patton Street. Entrances to Ballou Park and Dan Daniel Memorial Park have also been improved with new annual and perennial flowering plants and bushes.

Although it may not be directly associated with landscaping and beautification, the City has stepped up its litter pick up and pursuit of illegal dumping. The Public Works Department has implemented three full-time litter crews, utilizing inmates from the City's Adult Detention facility to provide the manpower necessary for these projects.

Beautification efforts may seem to be unimportant in a time when budgets are tight, but the maintenance, care, and beauty of our City speaks volumes to visitors about the pride we have in our community. The quick glance of a perspective business

client while traveling down one of our highways or in one of our public buildings or schools will determine the irreversible “first impression” our City makes.

Through the City’s new DIG Program the responsibility of making Danville a beautiful place to live and work can be shared with local businesses. By showing their pride and interest in their community, these businesses are setting an example for all of us to follow.

There are many factors of a City’s demographics that are out of the control of the local government struggling to recruit new industries in a competitive global market. The impact of a sluggish economy, lack of airport service or the absence of an interstate highway exchange are all things that are beyond the control of City government alone, but the care that the City takes over its appearance is within its control.

All these things are extremely important because the beauty of a City is not just a matter of flowers and grass. It is also a reflection of the pride and prosperity of a community; much like a warm smile that is presented to a stranger. The image that Danville presents to a perspective industry or potential resident will have more influence than all the development incentives or salaries that can be offered.

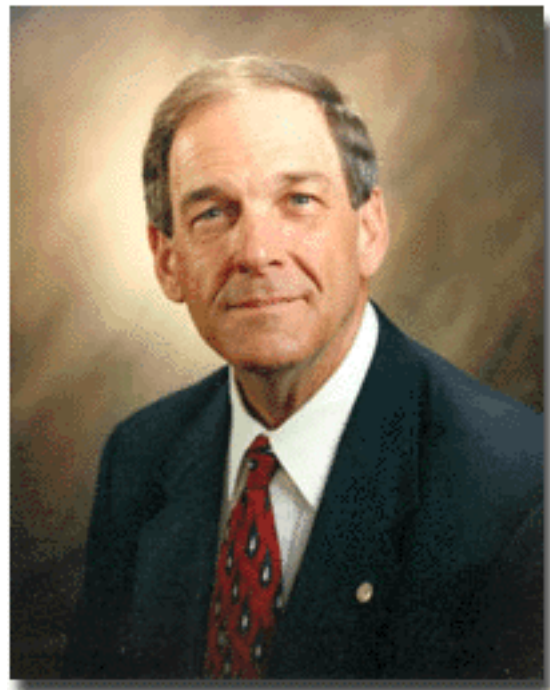
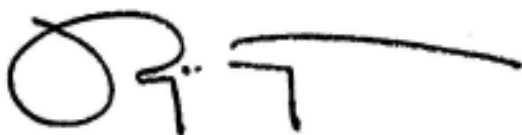
That is why it is so important that we all “work together” to bring out all the hidden qualities of our City, such as the magnificent views of the Dan River, the beauty of the scenic by-ways, and the warmth of our older, historic neighborhoods.

Sponsors of the DIG sites around the City include the Danville Regional Medical Health Care Center, Virginia Trane & Raywood Landscaping, Woodall Chevrolet, and Dewberry & Davis. A business can sponsor a garden for \$250 a month for 5 years. To sign up as a DIG garden sponsor please contact Rick Drazenovich 434-799-5245. Many future locations are available.

Even the little things count. By picking up that stray piece of paper or pulling a few weeds from a flower bed, remembering to use the trash cans or watering that flower pot right outside of your business, we can all take part. It is too big a job for just a few organizations.

For the City of Danville to achieve the attractive appearance that we want, it will take all of us working together for a common goal. I am confident we can do this because we have demonstrated that DANVILLE CAN attitude before. Remember that by working together DANVILLE CAN!

Thank you for your continued support,



Jerry L. Gwaltney